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SUBJECT: CZECH CONFERENCE ON BURMA - LAUNCHES FORMATION OF
EU PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA

REF: A. CARNIE-COPE E-MAIL DATED 11.9.07

- [1](#)B. STATE 148530
- [1](#)C. STATE 148528
- [1](#)D. PRAGUE 1169
- [1](#)E. PRAGUE 1158
- [1](#)F. PRAGUE 1124
- [1](#)G. PRAGUE 1086

[1](#)1. Summary: With funding from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Parliamentarians from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Estonia, and U.S. Embassy participation, the NGO "People in Need" hosted a conference "Burma Alert: Action Needed Now" on November 6. The event, which was launched by former President Vaclav Havel, was held at the Czech Parliament and included panel discussions on civil society activities, international community support, and recommendations from Burmese advocacy groups. The Members of Parliament produced a statement which, among other things, calls upon European MP colleagues to join in creating an "EU Parliamentary Network for Democracy in Burma." This statement (ref A) is currently being circulated for signature by additional MPs not present at the conference. End Summary.

Set Benchmarks and an End Date

[1](#)2. During the conference, the participants made a number of interesting suggestions for action. For example, Sein Win, the "Prime Minister of the Exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma," indicated he was encouraged by the recent regime engagement with Aung San Suu Kyi. He stated, however, that the regime typically drags out negotiations and only negotiates on superficial matters. Thus, Sein Win emphasized the need for the UN Special Envoy Gambari to establish benchmarks and a closing date for negotiations. On the topic of negotiations, several speakers highlighted the importance of including ethnic minority issues and that there must be consequences if negotiations break down.

Call for Multi-Party Talks

[1](#)3. During his remarks, Harn Yawnghe, Director of the "Euro-Burma Office" based in Belgium, noted that while years of dialogue with the military has not produced results, the unity of the international community now may have an effect. He proposed that the international community press for the establishment of multi-party talks, along the lines of what

we have for North Korea, with the involvement of key neighbors (i.e. India and China) and under UN auspices. On a final note, Yawngghwe warned against the establishment of any parallel process of negotiations to the UN, such as via the auspices of a new EU special envoy. (Note: The EU announced the appointment of EU Special Envoy for Burma/Myanmar Pierro Fassino on November 6. End Note.) He, and Charles Chong, Singapore MP and Member of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus, both stated that by establishing different channels of negotiation, the regime would likely attempt to play one party against the other and further delay meaningful action.

Applying Pressure to ASEAN on Burma

¶4. While Harn Yawngghwe urged the EU to use the summits with ASEAN, India and China to encourage these key players to put pressure on the regime, an audience member went one step further and suggested that Burma should be suspended from ASEAN. The Singapore MP Charles Chong explained that the majority position within ASEAN currently is to engage with Burma, rather than to suspend it. Chong also noted that Burma had been forced to forgo its turn in the ASEAN presidency and that Burma is on the agenda for the upcoming ASEAN meeting. Gabriela Dlouha, Czech MFA Director for Human Rights and Transition Policy commented that Czech Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg, who has been engaged actively regarding the situation in Burma and met with representatives of the Burmese opposition on November 2, intends to discuss Burma with his Asian partners at the upcoming EU-ASEAN Summit.

Stop Burmese Generals Receiving Medical Treatment in Singapore

¶5. A Buddhist monk in the audience questioned Singapore MP

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Chong about why the Singapore government allows Burmese officials to travel to Singapore to receive medical treatment. Restricting this travel would be particularly appropriate in his opinion since the regime does not allow ordinary Burmese citizens to travel outside the country to receive treatment. Chong urged the monk to provide names and details and said he would continue to press his government to restrict travel of members of the Burmese regime.

¶6. Comment: PIN's aim in coordinating this conference was to facilitate dialogue among a diverse and energized group of parliamentarians and NGOs, especially those in the new EU states, which it achieved. Additionally, we anticipate that several MPs, particularly those that helped form the "EU Parliamentary Network for Democracy in Burma" will help bolster the growing chorus of Europeans speaking out more forcefully and regularly on the situation in Burma.

¶7. Comment Continued: Post wishes to offer its thanks to EAP/MLP for its assistance crafting our conference remarks, which were well-received.
Graber